TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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OF RELIGION

Building a Strong Church in a Small Community

CARL GEORES

• The constant shifting of population away from the small community has left its mark upon the rural church. Many small churches have lost their leadership and economic support, and have had to close their doors. The result has been most disheartening for those who have remained in these small communities.

But an active, dynamic church is not dependent upon large numbers of people—Jesus called twelve men to be his apostles. Concern, commitment, cooperation—these are the basic elements for building a church in a rural community. The concern must be to serve God and men, which includes a desire to grow in the understanding of the Christian faith and a desire to have the church become a vital part of community life.

The Community Church in Leeds, Maine, owes its existence, at least in part, to the fact that a group of people in the community were concerned because there was no community-type church in town and did something about it. A committee was organized in 1951 to find help in organizing a church. The committee appealed to the Interdenominational Commission of Maine for help, and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. responded with help through its Board of National Missions. Today there is an organized church in the community, but without the concern of the community it is doubtful if anything would have happened.

Stewardship

But concern is not enough. There must be a commitment to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. We must recognize that this involves every phase of our life—home, work, and community, as well as the church. The concept of the church as a building and place for worship must give way to the idea that the church is a living congregation of people who serve the Lord and are guided by the Holy Spirit in all of the varied activities of life. To have a dynamic active church means that its people will give willingly of their talents, time and money. There are no spectators in the Christian life.

A church in a small community demands more work and sacrifice of its members than does a large town or city church. Leaders are fewer, resources are limited—but the task of the church remains the same. It must have a program that serves the needs of all age groups. Sunday school teachers will often find themselves hard at work in a women's group. Youth leaders will have to give extensively of their time and talents if a vital program is developed that will hold the interest of the young people in the total community. In many communities there are almost no opportunities for group recreation or social activities. The church has a splendid oppor-

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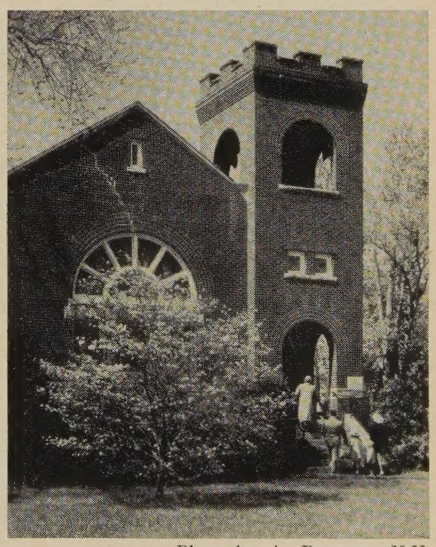

Photo by A. Devaney, N.Y.

(*Continued from Page* 1)

tunity to meet that need if its people will give of themselves.

Opportunities for study and growth in understanding the Christian faith not only have to be provided, people must be willing to take advantage of their opportunities to learn. As Christians pray together, study together and work together they see that the Christian gospel is relevant for our day and age. God becomes personal and real. The Christian life becomes filled with never-ending opportunities to serve God by serving man. Bible study and prayer become as essential to life as eating three meals a day.

Cooperation

The person who is concerned and committed to serve Jesus Christ must also be willing to cooperate with other people in the church and with other groups of people within the community. The hardest problem in any small town is to find a way to make it possible for people to work together for common goals and the good of all. Very often people make their decisions as to whether they will join a church or work on a given project on the basis of who belongs or who does not belong. Personality clashes or long-standing personal grievances often overcome the noblest of goals.

This is the major test of our faith in the small town. We often fail at the point where the Christian Church and its message is most needed. We are separated from God, we are separated from one another, but we need not be. Relationships built upon mutual trust and respect will provide the basis for a real fellowship.

The people who work together in the service of Christ should easily be able to see the value of working cooperatively with other groups in the community. Good churchmen make good grangers. They should work for strong public schools, be interested in good roads and improving community facilities. The county agent and farm organizations should find the church and its people always interested in the latest trends in agriculture. The church should be alert to the needs of its people, have a basic concern for the poor and stand ready to help those who have no friends.

The symbol of the church as a building standing by the side of the road, unused and unnoticed, must go. In its place must come a congregation of people who are serving God and man, people who give their allegiance to Jesus Christ, who show their faith by the life they live. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." We must share that life.

Photo by Eva Luoma

New England Commission Has Executive Secretary

• The New England Town and Country Church Commission has announced the appointment of the Rev. Ben Andrew as Executive Secretary of the Commission. The position is new in this organization, which has served town and country work in the six New England states since its inception in 1931 and has stimulated much pioneering work in cooperative church activities. Under its new constitution, it works closely with and through the state councils of churches to strengthen the town and country church work in New England.

The executive secretary will have oversight of the annual New England Rural Church Workers Conference, held each year at Ocean Park, Maine; will supervise the "Missionary to America" project which brings nationals from other countries to town and country churches in New England each year; will direct the work of the research and sharing committees through which the organization carries on studies and sponsors activities and exchange of information in the fields of Christian Education, Evangelism, Social Education and Action, Radio and Television, and similar fields in the six New England states.

Ben Andrew is well qualified for this position as he has pioneered in cooperative town and country church work in New England and elsewhere throughout his ministry. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and Oberlin Theological Seminary. Mr. Andrew retired last spring from the United Parish at Lunenberg, Mass., which he founded in 1949.

—Gertrude G. Harris

Chiaroscuro

WILLIAM J. RUPP

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'ragedies I Have Seen

A white birch bent low to the round after a long, freezing rain—o longer able to lift its face to the lue sky nor laugh with the wind nd smile with the sun, because the urden of ice on its branches is more ıan white birches can bear!

A baby chipping sparrow fallen om its nest, abandoned by its parnts and lying in the grass, tornented by ants and waiting through ıe hot day and cool, damp night for ıerciful death!

A lost puppy trotting down the lley in the rain, cold and wet and ungry, looking for something to eat nd for somebody to pat its dirty ttle head and say a friendly word –but looking in vain!

A little boy with a cowboy hat and wo toy pistols in their shining holers, roaming the streets, bent on adenture and trying hard to look very rave because his modern parents ave turned him loose, wanting him o be on his own, when all he wants s to be loved, to have parents read tories to him, to listen to his prayrs and sit with him in church!

'lorious Things I Have Seen

A giant white oak on a hilltop, tanding tall and straight after the torms of three generations!

Baby Baltimore orioles swinging n their hammock-nest, looking out ıpon a dizzy, shaking world and feelng quite safe and comfortable in a ood home made for them by parnts who really know what they are loing!

A young collie, wandering and ong lost, finding a boy who takes ıer in and loves her as he loves himelf and who lets her sleep under his ed until he can provide the nice ennel that a lost collie deserves!

A little fellow, just a bundle of ıoise and dirt and mischief on weeklays, snuggled between mother and lad in a church pew on Sunday norning and looking very much like ı king on his throne because he is n God's house and cradled by a great, warm love!

Photo by Eva Luoma

Nebraska's Library—Community Project

• The public library, as a community resource, is taking a new and invigorating look at itself in Nebraska.

The announcement came a year ago that Nebraska was to be one of the two honored states (Wisconsin was the second) to receive a special grant from the American Library Association for a two-year Library-Community Project. This special project is designed to study the role of the library in the community and to show how the library can best serve its "public." The project is based on the assumption that a library needs broad, deep, and specific knowledge of the community, its character, its problems, its educational needs and resources. From this knowledge, the library can then adapt its services to meet the needs discovered by the survey. It is pointed out that this project is a library-community self-study. The survey is to be done locally, the local librarian working with a lay-citizen committee.

To develop techniques which are uniquely adapted to Nebraska, the project selected Hastings as a pilot library center. In cooperation with the Hastings Adult Educational Council, a questionnaire was prepared and submitted to over one hundred community organizations. From the information already supplied by the questionnaire, the Hastings Library has begun a Community Organization file and the pilot librarian has several suggestions for book buying and for providing special book lists, programs for clubs and organizations, or visits of these clubs or organizations to the library. An expansion of this survey technique to all of Nebraska's public libraries is the ulitmate goal of LCP.

—Reprinted from *University of Nebraska News*

HARVEST FESTIVAL

A Statement

• The celebration of "harvest home" is very old and has a place in the history of many peoples. The maturing harvest has inspired men to expressions of praise and thanksgiving which have found their way into religious services of all lands and faiths. The great Hebrew festivals had agricultural associations. The Feast of Unleavened Bread in the "month of earing" celebrated the appearance of ripening ears and the start of the barley harvest; the worshipper brought a sheaf of the new grain in consecration of the first-fruits. The Feast of Pentecost was the closing festivity of the seven weeks' joy of harvest. The Feast of Tabernacles in the time of the harvest moon was the crowning harvest festival, celebrating the ingathering of fruit, oil and wine.

Primitive folk festivals at harvest time combined with the Hebrew tradition under the auspices of the Christian Church to give England its joyous "Harvest Home" celebrations, Germany its "Erntedankfest" and Scotland its "Kirn." Pageantry, sports, singing, feasting and the comradeship of master, mistress and workers characterized these occasions and became the social and spiritual expressions of joy at the Harvest's end. The Pilgrims kept their day of thanksgiving on the shores of New England with feasting and religious exercises.

Some churches, like the Reformed, Lutheran, Mennonite, Moravian and Brethren, have continued to celebrate "harvest home," but in some other communions this practice has been all but abandoned, or the emphasis has been shifted to Thanksgiving Day in late autumn and the remembrance of national blessings, with but minor reference to the bounties of the harvest. This unfortunate trend has produced a nation of town and country churches in whose worship the references to seedtime and harvest are peculiarly lacking. No worship can, without losing vitality, remove itself from the ordinary pursuits of men. It is especially in connection with agriculture, where the mystery and providence of seed, soil and harvest are so evident, that this needs to be kept in mind.

The Harvest Festival may be held from August to November, but September and October are the most suitable months. It is best to keep it as a special day, apart from homecomings, anniversaries, rally days and annual meetings. Since decorations and offerings play such an important part in this festival, it must be held when suitable produce is available. The flowers, fruits, vegetables and other produce used as decorations and brought as thank-offerings may be given to homes, hospitals and other charitable institutions, or they may be distributed among the sick and needy in the community. Cash offerings for missionary and charitable purposes may also be received at this time.

The annual Order of Service for a Harvest Festival is now ready for distribution. Designed for use by a congregation, it calls the attention of all communions, rural and urban alike, to the opportunities for religious experience and expression in services of thanksgiving and dedication at the harvest season. This year's leaflet was prepared for the Department of Town and Country Church by the Rev. Duff Tucker, Presbyterian minister and Director of the Parish of The Larger Vision, Synod of Illinois.

This order of service may be procured from your denominational home mission board or from the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $1.50 for each 100 copies. Carriage extra on quantity orders.

Four things come not back:
The spoken word;
The sped arrow;
Wasted time;
Neglected opportunity.

—Omar Ibn-Al-Halif

What Is a Missionary?

• In these troubled times we are trying in a number of ways to understand persons and societies that are different from ourselves. Our contacts with them have often been vague, sometimes distorted. We know that we do not have the basic information that we need. We feel, sometimes with chagrin, that our own motives and outlook are misunderstood.

The so-called "missionary," as such, has always been a bridge between differing societies. He goes out from one and into another with the conviction that something that he carries with him can be of value to those with whom he is to live and work. This requires a high degree of common sense, a down-to-earthness, and a tolerance of other ways of living. And, above all, it requires infinite patience. Those who have such gifts can be true missionaries in the best sense.

These comments are inspired by the death of Dr. Sam Higginbottom, one of the most distinguished and successful of our missionaries to India. He was respected and loved by Indians, Britons and Americans. He had the confidence of princes and was a saint to the humble villagers. Hindus, Moslems, Parsis, Jhats and Jains, as well as Christians, did him honor. Mohandas K. Ghandi espoused his work and men came from all over India to see what he was doing.

That was not hard to see. He was teaching Indians something about contour plowing and crop rotation in the agricultural college there in Allahabad. He was putting emphasis upon selective breeding of stock. He was putting in a great life's work in the war against hunger. He was teaching young people how better to live in their environment, and how, eventually, to change it. He taught by example rather than by precept. He understood and respected religious faiths other than his own. And he was trusted.

We need more missionaries of that sort. They are not easy to find.

—From an editorial in *The York Times,* June 15, 1958.

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RICHARD O. COMFORT
Executive Director, Department of the Town and Country Church

RUTH B. ROBINSON
Editor

Advisory Committee

BENSON Y. LANDIS

MARK RICH

E. W. MUELLER

Contributors of articles to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH speak for themselves and not for the National Council of Churches or sponsoring organizations.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

The Bi-Vocational Minister in Rural Society

MARK RICH

• The minister who carries on two occupations or vocations is not a new type of person. The Apostle Paul and a host of others followed that course. It was not uncommon for the early American rural minister to be a doctor, a teacher, or a farmer, as well as a minister of the Gospel. Some religious groups, not believing in a trained ministry or not able to support it, have depended upon laymen to serve as ministers.

To say that conditions in rural life are changing rapidly is no novel statement—more people are wanting a trained ministry and programs beyond those desired a half century ago. The cost of living does not leave unaffected the size of church budget necessary to operate. In the 1920's a minister (as other people) could purchase a new small car for six or seven hundred dollars. In 1958 three times that amount will not buy a comparable vehicle. Yet ministers' salaries have not been multiplied by three.

To meet the rising cost of living bi-occupationalism is becoming common among laymen, and wives often work outside the home. Thinking that the same influences might be producing a similar effect among rural clergymen, the writer set out to make a limited study. The thesis was that a new type of minister might be taking his place on the rural scene—a minister who is trained for the ministry, who thinks of himself as a minister and gives that vocation priority, but who in addition carries on another occupation.

A questionnaire, sent to national secretaries of rural church work, as well as to some others, sought to locate ministers who fall within this definition of the bi-vocational minister. While the study was not extensive, it seems safe to assume that there is not a large number of ministers who meet this definition. This may be because some denominations discourage the bi-vocational arrangement. The writer does not know of any board or denomination that actually encourages the bi-vocational ministry, so, generally, one would expect to find examples of the bi-vocational ministry in those churches which permit a maximum of freedom to the local church and which have a minimum of control over the local church and its minister.

This study will have little statistical significance. It does not represent the total situation. The facts gathered, however, are believed to have validity as far as they go. They reveal the minds of some bi-vocational ministers and point out certain issues.

Perspective

This discussion is based upon questionnaires returned by forty-four ministers. Only twenty-one ministers fully met the requirement of the definition; namely to be fully-trained ministers who thought of themselves as ministers. High school and college training and at least two years of seminary work was the standard set. All but eight of the forty-four ministers thought of themselves primarily as ministers. All but one were ordained. Five of the forty-four were retired. One was an assistant minister.

The ministers lived in twelve states. Among the denominations represented were the Disciples of Christ, The Church of the Brethren, Evangelical and United Brethren, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Federated. Most of the ministers served only one church. Eight served two churches; four served three churches; and one had four churches.

Fifteen of the churches served were located in open country and three

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were in cities of over 30,000. The average size town in which forty-two of the churches were located was 1,348.

The forty-four ministers reporting represented a rather high degree of training, general or theological. Even those who were not trained ministers were men with extensive educational background.

More than a third of forty ministers reported their second occupation as teaching in public schools, colleges or theological schools. Two of the thirteen were college deans. Farming came next, with eight engaged in it. One of the eight also sold insurance. Two ministers drove school busses. The others were probate judge, lawyer, chaplain for a mental hospital. Y.M.C.A. professional staff, insurance salesman, fund raiser, common laborer, nuclear scientist, engineer, church janitor, mail carrier, post office worker, speaker and writer, graduate student, manager and salesman, railway representative, and university extension worker.

Not including five farmers who rated their work as seasonal, thirty-one ministers spent an average of thirty-two hours a week at the second occupation. This is equivalent to four eight-hour days spent at the second occupation each week.

A considerable number of the ministers had some training for their second occupation.

The ministers expressed the opinion that $4,454.50 plus an automobile allowance of $320.36 and a house would be an adequate income to provide a comfortable living and the incentive for an effective full-time ministry where they were located. Counting house rent as twenty percent of salary, the total income desired would be $6,040.82.

The average salary actually received from churches by forty ministers was $2,299.77. From the second occupation the average income for thirty-four ministers was $3,430.85. One minister with an unusually high income was eliminated from this calculation. It appears that the average total income received by the bi-vocational ministers runs well over $6,000, an amount higher than all but one group thought necessary to keep men in their situations as full-time ministers. Seventeen ministers received free use of parsonage. No information was secured on whether the wives worked remuneratively.

Advantages

The bi-vocational ministers were asked the question: "What do you consider the advantages of the bi-vocational ministry—for you, for your family, for your church? The answers for the three parts of the question were thrown together and classified. According to those engaged in it, ten advantages seemed to be attached to the bi-vocational arrangement. They are summarized here approximately in order of the frequency with which the advantage was named.

1. The additional income derived from the pursuit of two vocations appears to be the single most important gain from the bi-vocational ministry.
2. A second benefit is that churches are served that would not be served so well by other means.
3. The second occupation helps a minister to identify himself with the life and experiences of his people.
4. Longer pastorates are another outgrowth of the bi-vocational ministry.
5. A small number of ministers expressed the thought that through the bi-vocational ministry they are more independent of the control of the church they serve.
6. A number of ministers think that bi-vocational practice gives the church and the minister a larger influence. The church becomes more widely known through a bi-vocational minister than it might otherwise.
7. The bi-vocational ministry satisfies the sense of call.
8. A small number of ministers look upon the bi-vocational ministry as a means through which to use all of the minister's abilities.
9. Two ministers look upon the second occupation as recreation or a hobby that carries financial gain with it.
10. One minister, a professionally trained teacher, makes the point that training and experience received for and in the second occupation is exactly what may be very necessary for a constructive ministry.

Disadvantages

Then the ministers were asked the opposite question: "What do you consider the disadvantages of the bi-vocational ministry—for yourself, for your family, for the church?" While the answers have little statistical significance, they appear to have validity.

The disadvantages or problems associated with the bi-vocational ministry fell into seven categories:

1. Apparently the most serious disadvantage is the heavy burden it throws upon the minister.
2. A second problem is that the second vocation conflicts sharply with the carrying on of the administrative and program work of the church.
3. Another problem is the danger of the second occupation taking time and energy which should be devoted to the first occupation.
4. Another objection is that the bi-vocational ministry limits the time a minister has to spend with his family.
5. Two ministers named the problem of decrease in prestige which the bi-vocational minister suffers.
6. Another problem is that it tempts churches to do less than they are able to do.
7. The seventh problem is that the church itself may feel that it is getting the small end of a bad bargain by having the part-time services of a minister who does other things.

Summary

The evidence gathered does not prove convincingly that the bi-vocational ministry is wholely desirable or wholely undesirable, but it is certain that the matter of salaries for ministers needs more attention. A full-time ministry, with well-developed hobbies or some form of productive home practices, appears to be the ideal. But many conditions influence the possibility of living up to the ideal. With the current short-

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God, Soil, and Water

DON W. FROGGE

The Bible relates that floods were the judgment of God upon mankind. Many of us have thought of this concept as being far removed from the God of love pictured by the historic Jesus, but with the resurgence of interest in judgment themes we may see a wider application of the ancient flood stories.

Particularly in mid-western United States (Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma, Missouri) there have been floods of widespread damage. There always seems to be either too little or too much water. Newspapers herald the devastation to the cities along the major rivers, forgetting that probably for every dollar of destruction in the city there was a loss of at least three dollars in the countryside.

Flood Control

Farmers accustomed to the perennial vicissitudes of weather are more likely to take the floods stoically. Their city cousins with massive voting power refused to be calm and worked through their congressmen —today flood control projects are in the making. Army engineers are preparing plans to submit to Congress and some plans are already being carried out. Farmers with an ear to Washington for price supports failed to hear the rumblings of "big dam projects."

Tuttle Creek farmers in Kansas were caught with their backs to the wall and with no ammunition. They had no rebuttals save caravans of people to go to Washington and sentimentality about their precious bottom land. They lost the battle! However, their plight was the "eye-opener" for thousands of others. The rolling flood waters had brought the Judgment of God down upon their heads. What the Soil Conservation people had been saying for years was true!

It was brought home again that the earth's crust not only feeds the world, but floods the world. The words relating to the ancient flood story in *Genesis* have received renewed vitality: "And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth." We began to retrace our steps. We remembered the Indians, and how grass taller than a man's head kept the water where it fell. We remembered the springs Grandpa told about that haven't existed during our lifetime.

Crashing, bolting, came the Judgment. "Your greed caused you to misuse the soil and the water. You planted for dollars, not for your sons and daughters. You were stubborn and told the soil conservationist that as long as you could remember there had been soil and water a-plenty. And now your choice land is going to have a sixty-foot layer of water over it. Big dams are coming!"

Conservation

And this is the Judgment. But some are beginning to fall on their knees in repentance. "Remember, O Congress and city brethren, remember the Hope-Aiken Act (P.L. 566), let us use it, and redeem ourselves and our land. So, hopefully, the countryside is organizing into watersheds.

This could be the opening up of a whole new era in the mid-west. Projects like the Sandstone Watershed along the Washita River in Oklahoma, under way since the 1930's, prove what can be done. More recently, the pilot watershed project in Brown County in Kansas has demonstrated the possibilities that lie ahead. By collective planning under the supervision of the Soil Conservation Service, a whole valley can awake to responsible living. Little dams (not big dams) will bring salvation to the farmer's inheritance. Contour farming, terracing, waterways, cover crops, etc., will save his acres. Better methods of plowing, crop rotation, will help keep both soil and water at home. A replenished soil will cause the springs to rise again. The Indians' rivers that never went dry will flow again, but the flow of water will be controlled. Nearby cities need not fear the raging waters. Thousands of dollars will be saved!

But will it happen? Any alert, trained conservationist knows that it could happen. Recently, Eastern newspapers warned that if the farmers didn't take care of the land and water, the government would be forced to do it for them. The warning from the East is just a little late. Either the people in the countryside will wake up and demonstrate their willingness to put conservation facts into practice or they will be displaced from the land, victims of "stop-gap" plans from the drawing boards of Army engineers.

Some saw the writing on the wall before the Judgment fell. In January, 1957, the Brotherhood of the open-country New Basel United Church of Christ, Elmo, Kansas, began talking in terms of soil and conservation management. By January of 1958 the Turkey Creek Watershed had a good start toward the complete organization of fourteen sub-watersheds.

The hour is late but there may still be time. Wake up rural communities! Wake up rural parishes! Get into action, and be good stewards of God!

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age of ministers, the small churches, the prevailing low salaries paid by many rural churches, the likelihood of doing away with the bi-vocational minister is remote. It is to be hoped that he will be bi-vocational according to the definition stated at the outset. He will be trained as a minister and think of himself as a minister. He will be devoted in both of his occupations to the call of Christ for winning the community to God.

It is the mind that maketh good or ill,
That maketh wretch or happy, rich or poor.

—EDMUND SPENSER

Disciple "Rural Minister of the Year"

The Rev. and Mrs. John E. Bloss; David; Sue; and Kay.

• The Rev. John E. Bloss, minister of the First Christian Church of Yukon, Oklahoma, was recently named "Rural Minister of the Year" for the Christian Churches of Oklahoma (Disciples of Christ).

Mr. Bloss has been minister of the church in Yukon since September 1, 1955. He previously served the Christian Church in Lindsay and the Northeast Christian Church in Oklahoma City. He received his A.B. degree from Phillips University in 1947 and his Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Seminary of Phillips University in 1950.

Mr. Bloss has done outstanding work with the church in Yukon and in the Brotherhood work in Oklahoma. The church has shown steady growth both in Sunday school attendance and in church membership, which now totals 319 members. During his ministry two additions to the church have been built, including classrooms and a fellowship hall. He has had an active and aggressive evangelistic and stewardship program for the church.

Mr. Bloss is active in the affairs of the community and cooperates in all interdenominational activities. He is also active in the denominational work of the state and promotes the work of the Brotherhood throughout the world. His wife, Helen, helps him in many activities around the church and community. The Blosses have three children. Those in the community speak highly of this family as setting a fine Christian example.

Prayer for America

Lord, while for all mankind we pray,
  Of every clime and coast,
O hear us for our native land,
  The land we love the most.

Unite us in the sacred love
  Of knowledge, truth, and Thee;
And let our hills and valleys shout
  The songs of liberty.

—JOHN REYNELL WREFORD

To the Editor of
Town and Country Church:

• As an old-timer and a layman who tries to read theology, I should like to join the Hotchkiss-Fuller conversation (TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, January and April, 1958).

I thought it was well established that parish ministers generally—urban and rural—have little time for scholarship today. Many have told me that this is the situation. This has come about, not because of any defect among ministers of our time, but as a result of a whole series of historical forces. Ministers are being forced to do so many other tasks that scholarship is crowded out. I regret this, and hope that ways will eventually be found to change our present tendencies.

As for the family farm, I am a family farm man. I prefer it as a result of my studies and predilections and comparisons with suburbs and cities. God, of course, loves equally those persons who live on family farms and on other farms and on the sidewalks of New York. I think it is grand that some people in the church have some specific convictions in the social and economic realm. I deplore a "church at large" which is so general that it seems to have no authentic convictions about good means and good ends in society.

The gospel is for all men everywhere—universal. But if the gospel is to be relevant in particular realms, the idioms of the theologian will vary. To think theologically about rural life requires an idiom that translates universals into certain particulars. And it may be that man's contact with the soil may be found to have peculiar significance for his health—physical and spiritual. New-mown hay may possess peculiar value to man. I find new-mown hay much better for all of God's children than smog or the exhaust from automobiles.

The gospel must be in tension with any social structure, but man is called upon to search for arrangements on earth that encourage the best and highest in his experience. Here again we have the duty to ex-

press preferences. I reserve the right to say that generous economic cooperation is better than every man for himself, and that democratic government is preferable to other forms.

I am not only concerned about tendencies to idealize rural life or to be especially appreciative of the Bible as a rural book. I would rather have a bit of poetic sentimentality than the indifference and apathy that I see widespread in the churches today. Nothing seems to be more important than that we should know what we believe and why.

—Benson Y. Landis

Credit Unions Organized

• Members of Protestant churches in the Western Hemisphere organized seventeen new credit unions in the past few months, the Credit Union National Association (CUNA) reports.

There are now 500,000 members in the 1,400 credit unions that have been organized among religious groups. About 300 of these credit unions have been formed among Protestant church groups.

A breakdown of the credit unions by denominations shows: Baptist 85; Methodist 44; A.M.E. 24; Presbyterian 16; Episcopal 11; Anglican and United Church of Canada, each 10. The remaining 96 credit unions are spread among the various other Protestant denominations. Credit unions for members of Catholic parishes total 1,100.

Credit unions are composed of small groups of people with a common bond, such as belonging to the same church or parish, who pool their savings and make low-cost loans to each other for good purposes. Members own and operate their own credit union under state, federal or provincial law with government supervision.

There are now more than 25,000 credit unions with twelve million members in all walks of life, according to CUNA, the non-profit association of credit unions which has its national headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin.

Wanted—Farmer and Wife

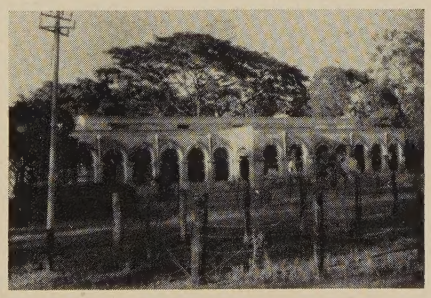
• The East Pakistan Christian Council is developing a Leadership Training Center on a fifty-five-acre farm. There are four areas of training for the young adults who are chosen by the village churches: young men are being trained for co-ops; young men for farming; young women for health and home-making; and college students for work camps. After the period of training, these young people return to their villages as "pilots."

The East Pakistan Christian Council needs a farmer and his wife to help in this Leadership Training Center. The man should be trained in agronomy, animal husbandry and farm mechanics. He should have experience in operating a farm, be in good health, have a good record of community leadership, and be willing to try the job for three years. The farmer's wife should have some training in health, nutrition, infant care, sanitation, be an experienced housewife and physically fit, and should be willing to be co-employed with her husband on this job.

Two fine young nationals—husband and wife—will be your "counterparts." They speak some English, are quite progressive, are good leaders, and will become your good friends.

The salary scale is the same as for missionaries. The date for starting is perhaps January 1, 1959. There is no school for your children. Living conditions are the same as for missionaries.

Address airmail to James D. Wyker, Mission House, Mymensingh, East Pakistan, and send carbon copy to his home: Route 2, Mount Vernon, Ohio.



A Missionary's House at Mymensingh, East Pakistan

Thinning and Weeding the Rice Crop

"Rural Ministers of the Year" Cited

• Fourteen clergymen from as many Southeastern states were honored as "Rural Minister of the Year" at a banquet climaxing the Church and Community Workshop at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

This was the tenth annual selection of rural pastors to receive awards under the joint sponsorship of Emory's Candler School of Theology and *The Progressive Farmer*, an agricultural magazine published at Birmingham, Ala.

For the first time a physician was cited. He is Dr. P. W. Tribble, 71, of the Forsyth County Hospital, Cumming, Ga., and a part-time Baptist minister.

Other denominations represented in the awards were Christian (Disciples of Christ), Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational.

Also cited "Rural Ministers of the Year" were:

The Rev. R. Bruce Harper of Athens, Texas; the Rev. R. R. Craig, Durant, Oklahoma; the Rev. C. O. Greene, Lawndale, North Carolina; the Rev. Russell W. Park, Olanta, South Carolina; the Rev. Eugene E. Chafin, Rich Creek, Virginia; the Rev. Hugh E. Delaney, Corinth, Kentucky; the Rev. Sam Varnell, Piney Flats, Tennessee; the Rev. Vernon Robinson, Olive Branch, Mississippi; the Rev. Albert Neill Storey, Conway, Arkansas; the Rev. Paul Leeds, Kinder, Louisiana; the Rev. J. Clifton Draper, Sr., Jasper, Alabama; the Rev. Ernest B. Luttrell, Lake City, Florida; and the Rev. Robert M. Fuqua, Ripley, West Virginia.

Notes on Recollections

IX. Theology and Rural Life

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• In 1952, the late Dr. Thomas Alfred Tripp of the Congregational Christian Churches and I carried on jointly a ten-day seminar, traveling to and in Nova Scotia. We went in his car and, as we later said, discussed all known subjects. We went to St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, where we discussed thoroughly their well-known program of adult education by means of economic cooperation. I enjoyed the exchange of stories on the part of Monsignor M. M. Coady and Dr. Tripp. These exciting tales came from Oklahoma and Nova Scotia.

On our return we talked about the tendency of staffs of religious organizations to deal hurriedly and superficially with immediate concerns. We noted that many executives seem always in a big hurry, as they take up from their desks those matters which require attention at once, and then sometimes rush away to make a speech that is hurriedly prepared. Alice Maloney of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. once said that the rule seems to be that you stay in the office until you can't stand it, then you go to the field until you can't stand it.

Then Dr. Tripp and I made mention of certain writings by theologians and social scientists that dealt with principles, methods, and findings that seemed seldom to be referred to in the course of the daily, or weekly, or yearly work. We referred to the series of university seminars that had been begun about a decade earlier at Columbia University. We thought it might be useful to try to organize an informal seminar at which the participants would expose themselves to the writings of both theologians and social scientists, including those that seemed to have made some synthesis of, say, theology and sociology.

An informal and strictly unofficial Seminar on Theology and Rural Life was soon organized, and it has now functioned for some years. We knew that theology was a somewhat difficult subject for an interdenominational group to discuss. Indeed, there were some that we invited who seemed to join reluctantly. We who started it wanted the title, "Theology and Rural Life." We did *not* want to be thought of as a group that would formulate a theology *for* any church, or *for* rural life, or *for* the rural church. In short, we wished to explore.

We soon found that we could not explore logically or systematically. We had to line up speakers when we could get them, and our discussions were often influenced by the travel schedules of the participants, who were mainly in the denominational boards and the National Council of Churches.

We started with a review by Wesley Hotchkiss, of the Congregational Christian Churches, of the book by Daniel Day Williams, *What Present Day Theologians Are Thinking.* We were impressed with the masterful summary given by the writer and discussed fully some of the issues raised. We spent a good deal of time on Dr. Williams' references to "community," and were later often to come back to various conceptions of that term, which the sociologists also use a good deal, and in official ways.

What do you mean by theology? This was a question we often asked. We had no official definition. It might refer to the official theology of a religious body; or to the theories taught by one theologian; or to a method of studying religion. We noted that theology is still referred to as the "queen of the sciences."

Alice Maloney gave us a paper on the teachings of Warren H. Wilson of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Dr. Wilson had been the first administrator of a department of a National church board that rendered special services to the rural churches. He was a strong and versatile man. He had studied sociology at Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Wilson was a man of many insights who understood well varied aspects of rural life. He saw the value of the resident pastor. He developed summer schools for in-service training which supplemented the professional courses that ministers received at theological seminaries. He had a sense of the tangibles and intangibles of farm life. He was known as the "dean" of the fraternity of rural church workers.

Harold Kaufman of the Mississippi College of Agriculture was spending a year at Columbia and attended several of our sessions. One day he reviewed a number of the studies that the rural sociologists of the South had made of rural communities and their problems.

Don F. Pielstick read a thorough review of the book published in England, *Rural Synthesis,* by Martin Thornton. The author had been both a farmer and a clergyman of the Church of England. He defended many of the generalizations—or cliches—heard about the social and spiritual values inherent in rural life. He believed that they were correct, after he had subjected them to his criticism.

John H. Reisner read to us a good part of the writings of Liberty Hyde Bailey on the holy earth and related subjects. The statements by Bailey are always stimulating to the thoughts of a group.

I gave one day an interpretation of the life and work of Bishop N. F. S. Grundtvig of the Church of Denmark, the controversial and versatile bishop who was given the title but no see. I drew upon recent biographies and also upon my interviews with numerous people in Denmark in 1949 concerning the influence on the national life of the labors and writings of the noted bishop who started a school of thought in the Danish Church.

I reported to the seminar that the persons I consulted from many walks of life in Denmark agreed that no

man had influenced modern Danish life more than Grundtvig, and some said without hesitation that he had been the greatest influence. As founder of the folk high schools he had helped to give Denmark a type of education to which many of the rural leaders had been exposed. Grundtvig created schools to which the future leaders of the great co-operatives went. He influenced Danish rural life but never mentioned agriculture in his writing. His schools were cultural, not technical or vocational. However, economic issues and methods were also discussed.

In 1957-58 the seminar explored bases of a policy of town and country church work, and made a report to the Department of Town and Country Church.

The Windows

Lord, how can man preach thy eternal word?
He is a brittle crazie glasse:
Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford
This glorious and transcendent place,
To be a window, through thy grace.

But when thou dost anneal in glasse thy storie,
Making thy life to shine within
The holy Preachers; then the light and glorie
More rev-rend grows, & more doth win;
Which else shows watrish, bleak, & thin.

Doctrine and life, colours and light, in one
When they combine and mingle, bring
A strong regard and awe; but speech alone
Doth vanish like a flaring thing,
And in the care, not conscience ring.

—George Herbert

Prayer

Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve:
to give, and not to count the cost;
to fight and not to heed the wounds;
to toil and not to seek for rest;
to labor and not to ask for reward,
except that of knowing that I am doing your will.

—From *The Rural Life Prayerbook,* published by The National Catholic Rural Life Conference

Statement on Ethical Goals for Agricultural Policy

adopted by

The General Board
The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Minneapolis, Minn. June 4, 1958

• A Christian ethical approach to agriculture begins with the acknowledgment that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." God, the Creator, has given man a special position in the world, with a specific responsibility for the fruits of the earth and towards all living things. This is the stewardship of the earth's resources for the nourishment and the enrichment of human life. Thus the production of food and fibre—the primary task of farmers—becomes a service to God and man.

In the light of basic Christian concepts, the National Council of Churches affirms certain major goals of agricultural policy and commends them to the churches and to the consciences of Christian men and women.

Opportunity for the full and wholesome development of persons. Poverty is often crippling to human personality. The fact that many farm families could not achieve adequate levels of productivity and income even during the decade of comparative farm prosperity following World War II makes it clear that both their situation and the national interest call for national programs designed to assist them to higher levels of living. General farm organizations, farmer cooperatives, and government should be encouraged to develop programs which will enlarge the opportunities for low-income farm families to earn adequate incomes and achieve satisfactory levels of living, either on or off the farm, as the sound basis for wholesome personality growth.

A violation of the Christian concept of justice exists in the fact that wage workers in agriculture are denied most of the legal and economic protections long accorded to wage workers in industry. We believe that, with adaptations required for their practical application to the business of farming (as in the enactments on social security), the principles of workmen's and unemployment compensation, minimum wage laws, and the right to organize and bargain collectively under the National Labor Relations Act should be extended to wage workers in agriculture.

Preservation of the integrity of the farm family and the enrichment of rural family life. The Christian faith attaches special significance to the family where Christian love and forgiveness can best be personally experienced. The adequate family farm has provided, throughout our history, that type of rural environment most conducive to the growth of human personality, the stability and enrichment of family life, and the strength of the community and its institutions. This pattern of agriculture also has contributed notably to national strength and the preservation of democratic attitudes and practices. Therefore, preservation and extension of the efficient family-type farm as the predominent pattern of American agriculture should be a conscious goal of our national policy.

The encouragement of voluntary association, cooperation, and mutual aid among farm people. Christian tradition has always emphasized mutual aid and cooperation as practical expressions of the command to love God and neighbor. One of the finest things farmers have done has been to associate themselves together in voluntary organizations for mutual aid and cooperation. Such association should be encouraged, with the

(*Continued on Page* 12)

(*Continued from Page* 11)

opportunity it provides for character growth through independent judgment, decision-making, responsibility-bearing, and the like. The churches should encourage full membership participation in such organizations of mutual aid and cooperation as a genuine contribution to both Christian and democratic ideals for society.

Conservation of nature's resources and their development for the legitimate uses of mankind. Conservation and wise use of the earth's resources are requirements of Christian stewardship. Such stewardship should always discipline the rights of ownership of agricultural resources. Conservation practices have to be applied ultimately by farmers on their own acres. Conservation, however, is also a national problem and requires national attention. The churches must help all people to see that each one of us owes a portion of the cost of conserving the nation's soil fertility. That charge can be met most effectively through publicly encouraged and supported programs of soil conservation.

Adequate and healthful diets for the world's growing populations. In Christian perspective the abundant agricultural production of America should be viewed as a blessing. Within sound conservation practices, and in the light of real national and world need, sustained and realistic abundance in agricultural production should be encouraged. Efficiency in production must be matched by effective distribution, to the end that all people may be fed and clothed. This requires application of imagination and good-will, both at home and abroad, through expanded programs of trade, economic aid, and programs of distribution carried on by the churches and other voluntary agencies, to break the barriers which persist between agricultural abundance and human need.

Fair and reasonably stable levels of income for farm producers. Justice demands that farmers who produce efficiently and abundantly, where such production is in the national interest, should not suffer from this fact, but should receive economic rewards comparable with those received by persons of similar competence in other vocations. Because of their ineffective bargaining position, farmers have rarely enjoyed true parity of income in the open market except during wartime periods of extreme demand. Sustained farm income is essential both as a requirement of justice for farmers and of stability for our total economy. Programs, when designed in accordance with sound economic principles, and equitably administered to protect farmers against sharp fluctuations and downward trends in real income, are a legitimate and necessary function of the federal government.

Recognition of human interdependence on a national and world scale. "We are severally members one of another" is a recurrent theme of Christian scripture. Every aspect of agricultural policy should be examined for its impact upon the general economy, both national and world-wide. Programs which seek to advance the interests of agriculture to the detriment of other groups or other nations should be shunned. American policy should give both moral and financial support to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization and other pertinent international bodies. We should also continue our policy of gradual reciprocal lowering of tariffs, including tariffs on agricultural products, and reduction of arbitrary restrictions on international trade. Programs of technical and economic assistance to underdeveloped areas should be promoted with vigor. With our mounting agricultural productivity, we as individual Christians and as a nation carry an ever-increasing obligation to share our abundance.

Silence

I need not shout my faith. Thrice eloquent
Are quiet trees and the green listening sod;
Hushed are the stars, whose power is never spent;
The hills are mute: yet how they speak of God!

—CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

November is RIAL Month

• November will be observed as Religion in American Life Month. It will be so proclaimed by the governors of most states and by the mayors of hundreds of communities.

Participating in community campaigns will be thousands of churches and synagogues, several hundred chapters of the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis clubs, PTAs, American Legion posts, labor unions, Rotary, Lions clubs, women's clubs, ministerial associations, councils of churches, and many youth groups.

To aid community RIAL committees in conducting their campaigns, the national RIAL organization produces a kit of useful materials which includes local program guides containing scores of helpful suggestions on tested promotional methods for raising worship attendance, and instructions on how to obtain RIAL posters, newspaper ads, radio and TV announcements for local media outlets.

These RIAL Program Kits are available free of charge on request to RIAL, 300 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y. Included in the kits are samples of all RIAL attendance builder cards, bulletin folder, prayer card, letterhead, and many other items available in quantity at cost.

Two new items have been added to RIAL program materials for the 1958-59 campaign. A folder, entitled "Hello," carries an invitation to friends and neighbors to worship. A single-sheet flyer-insert may be placed inside worship folder bulletins or calendars, or it may be used as a mailing piece. It bears the message, "Next week bring a friend to worship with you."

The Religion in American Life Program supports all churches and synagogues and strengthens religion in personal, community and national life. It urges all Americans to attend worship regularly and provides challenging opportunities for laymen to serve.

Envy is a fly that passes all a body's sounder parts and dwells upon the sores.—GEORGE CHAPMAN

Interdenominational Larger Parishes Sponsored by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Rantoul, Kansas

A mission supported interdenominational larger parish is located in Kansas around the small town of Rantoul. This consists of six Methodist, Presbyterian, and Evangelical United Brethren churches. It is a significant project because of its interdenominational character and because it has undergone careful supervision and constant study through the years resulting in adjustment to various changing conditions. For example, it was after study that two of the churches joined the group so they could be better cared for.

This started as a joint agreement between the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Rantoul, which were across the street from each other. They first joined their Sunday schools, using both buildings, and united in worship on alternate Sundays. Gradually this first step in cooperation led to the formation of the larger parish. The Rev. Carl Grondorf, Box 46, Rantoul, Kansas, is in charge of the project.

Booneville, Kentucky

The Ows-Lee Larger Parish in and around Booneville, Kentucky, is not only interdenominational, but interracial as well. It is composed of eleven churches and two preaching points, and has a diversified ministry. Leadership training is emphasized. The parish program is centered in the county seat town of Booneville. A new church building has recently been completed. The area is badly in need of recreational facilities for its young people, so the new church also has a swimming pool as well as a social hall where basketball and other games can be played. Several busses bring people from the outlying areas into the activities of the new church.

Progress on inter-racial attitudes is being made in the Parish. A joint vacation church school brought the two races together this year. Other recreational activities are also helping to mold a new attitude of cooperation and helpfulness between the races.

For further information, write to the Rev. Robert G. McClure, Booneville, Kentucky.

Macon County, Missouri

The Macon County Larger Parish in Missouri is interdenominational. This involves the Presbyterian Church at Ethel, Missouri; the Bevier Congregational Church at Bevier, Missouri, and the United Church (Congregational-Presbyterian) at New Cambria, Missouri. This parish was begun in 1948. The project has been successful from several points of view. It was set up in cooperation with the denominational leaders in Missouri for these denominations and these leaders have kept closely in touch with the Parish.

The three churches that are now involved have shown remarkable growth and a great deal of enthusiasm for the work of the Parish. All three churches have strengthened their own individual programs and the total Parish program has grown each year. One of the most beautiful and serviceable rural churches is the United Church in New Cambria. The two buildings that were formerly used by the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in New Cambria were sold and together the two congregations built this new structure which is an outstanding job of church architecture and a very usable building.

Another aspect of interest in the Parish has been that they have used summer students each year for the past several years to increase the program of the Parish. They have seriously considered the possibility of using an intern on a year-round basis to help the pastor in these three churches.

For further information about the parish, write to Mrs. Leonard Stuver, New Cambria United Church, New Cambria, Missouri.

Williamstown, New York

The On'Wego United Parish in the area of Williamstown, New York, includes two federated churches which are a combination of Methodist and Presbyterian people, and a Methodist church in an area where full-time agricultural work is on the decline. Many of the people are now working part-time or full-time in small industries nearby. Prior to 1944 these churches were united only by the fact that they were served by the same minister. Today, they have a cooperative group with a common staff including a director of Christian Education. A parish council works out the program. A Parish treasurer is caring for all the expenses. There is a United Youth Fellowship. Released time classes are held and cooperative vacation church schools are a part of the program.

For further information about the On'Wego United Parish, write to the Rev. George O. Pritting, Williamstown, New York.

—Henry S. Randolph

Nebraskan Receives Baptist Town and Country Award

• The Rev. Oscar J. Grindheim, pastor of Octavia (Nebraska) Community Church from 1951-1957, received the American Baptist Home Mission Societies' annual Rosa O. Hall Award for "demonstrating notable achievement in town and country churches."

Mr. Grindheim, now pastor of First Baptist Church, Hamburg, Iowa, was presented with the award at the fifty-first annual meeting of the American Baptist Convention.

During his ministry the Octavia church, a federation of Brethren and Baptist congregations, built an educational unit, installed a new electric organ, renovated the sanctuary and doubled its membership. Its Sunday school won the Year of Baptist Achievement attendance plaque.

Town and Country Church Publications

The Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches has the following items for sale:

Town and Country Churches and Family Farming, by Marshall Harris and Joseph Ackerman $1.50
(102-page book with many illustrative pictures)
Study guide to accompany the above book, bearing the same title ..... .10
Study of Low-Income Farm Families in Two Southern Rural Communities ..... .75
(Prepared for the Department by the National Council of Churches' Bureau of Research and Survey)
Poetry and Rural Life, by Benson Y. Landis ..... .50
(An interpretation of some American poets and their writings on rural values)
The Church and the Rural Community ..... .10
(A Proposal and A Guide for One-Day Institutes Dealing with Family Farm Problems)
A Guide to the Literature of Rural Life ..... .15

Overstock

The Department of Town and Country Church wants to clear its shelves and offers the following items to you at less than half price, as long as they last:

Reports of the 1954, 1955 and 1956 Convocations on the Church in Town and Country ..... per copy .20
Report of the conference held at Louisville, Ky., in 1955 on *The Christian Farmer and his Land* ..... .20
Study guide to accompany *The Christian Farmer and his Land* ..... .05
The Comity Report, by H. Paul Douglass ..... .15
(Some Protestant Churches in America)
Rural Prospect, by Mark Rich ..... .50
Cooperative Churches, by Ralph Felton ..... .10
Go Down Moses, by Ralph Felton ..... .10
These My Brethren, by Ralph Felton ..... .10
A Farmer Talks to His Son, by Nathaniel A. Talmage ..... .05
(Reprint of article in Town and Country Church)

Send your orders to the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Boy Scouts' Exploring Program

• Protestant churches that are seeking new and fresh program activities to help them attract and hold boys of high school age will be greatly interested in the announcement made by the Boy Scouts of America, that there will be available to them in November a new Exploring program which was formulated after extensive research and wide consultation with religious leaders, educators, and youth leaders. The new program has many elements that will appeal to the youth and to youth leaders of all Protestant churches, such as flexibility in method of operation, larger role of boys in leadership, emphasis on special interest groups, more coed social activities, new optional uniforms, and less emphasis on badges and awards.

When the Boy Scouts of America was looking for a name that would typify their new program for high-school age boys, they found that nothing could describe it better than "Exploring," which means "to reach for or after something." The primary purpose of the program is to help the youngster look into the future and prepare himself for it.

Exploring offers as part of a six-point program a variety of experiences that allow a young man to investigate various businesses, trades and professions.

Exploring encourages several different types of events and social affairs that require common knowledge of proper manner. Social events with coed participation, dad-and-son parties, parents' night, and other activities give ample opportunity for requesting help in picking up tips on social graces.

Exploring is putting strong emphasis on group and individual sports that normally are ignored until later in life. Games such as golf, handball, archery, and others that can be carried into adult life will be stressed.

Exploring offers conferences on how to be "Citizens Now," and through quarterly program literature will constantly encourage service projects to the home, the unit sponsor, and the community.

In this new Explorer program particular emphasis can be placed on enrolling boys who have never been associated with Scouting. The program has been designed to be of great interest to all high school age boys.

The new Exploring program is being launched early in November and churches may organize Explorer posts on the new plan after that time. Following the usual pattern of sponsorship practiced by the Boy Scouts of America, these units will be administered by the churches as a part of their own youth program.

BOOK REVIEWS

Advancing the Smaller Local Church. By W. Curry Mavis. Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, Indiana. 1957. $3.00.

Here is a practical message to the pastor or the layman who may need first to be assured of the importance of his job, and second to be shown some ways to meet the special challenge it offers.

Those of us who are engaged in the "smaller church" field are only too well aware of the overwhelming problems we face, and the vast number of churches we represent. But we need to be reminded often that small churches are important—not only because there happen to be so many of them, but because they have a particular mission to perform.

Dr. Davis speaks frankly for the small church as such, without apology, and without indulging in sentiment. He admits the limitations, but granting them all he believes success can be achieved, and not by striving for size. Although, as a church, it must reach out to include all who can and will share its fellowship, the measure for success is not membership per se but spiritual growth, and here the smallness, properly understood, can be its chief advantage.

Unfortunately, the intimacy of the small group leads too often to selfish introversion—the greatest spiritual hazard we face. The author does not minimize the dangers of cliquishness, personality tensions and insularism. But he believes that the church which is willing to test its own motives, and face its spiritual temptations with commitment and courage, can act to overcome the common problems of lack of leadership and money. These two "limitations" most often cited by those who argue for merger and federation, are secondary, says Dr. Davis.

Chapters five through fourteen, the body of the book, are "how to" chapters covering planning, training of workers, organizing and financing the program, pastoral care, Christian education and evangelism. The presentation is comprehensive and simply put, and neither superficial nor casual. Much of the content will be familiar of course to the seasoned worker, but many new suggestions are offered, and the whole is organized into a readable, workable manual. Here is the kind of study one underlines, tabs, and peppers with marginal comments. It would not be inappropriate if each section were followed with a few blank pages on which the reader might post his own ideas and anecdotes. One has the urge to write the author a letter, to share experiences.

In other words the book is a kind of personal message of counsel. It is not scholarly, and it is certainly not a panacea for all our ills, nor is it meant to be either of these. But it is addressed in simple language to pastors and workers who need plain practical ideas and encouragement more than eloquence, and it ought to be useful. The study is quite evidently written out of long personal experience, and the author speaks with authority.

—Alice Cobb

Beyond the Green Gate. By Ralph W. Seager. Wake-Brook House, Sanbornville, New Hampshire. 1958. $2.50.

Ralph W. Seager is a poet who thinks deeply on the revelations of life as he contemplates rural lanes. In this, his second book of verse, he opens before us several gates: *The Gate of Believing;* the *Gate of Loving;* the *Gate of Living.* There are sections for each. Finally, in one brief beautiful poem, we have *The Green Gate.*

This poet is his own best interpreter in the meaningful introductions to the various gates:

"Rural lanes have a great deal in common with life; each receives its wayfarer at the nearer end, guides him on to his destination and its destiny, and finally leads him out upon that vast and lonely meadow at the far end. As in life, the country lane will have proper gates, and in this book all gates open outward, away from the traveler as every proper gate should."

Mr. Seager has "no use for any kind of door" that makes one back up before one goes ahead.

The poems grouped under *The Gate of Believing* "hold more of faith" than those in the other parts. Here are a few poems with no evident religious overtones, but the poet—and this reviewer—believe they are works "of a deep believing." He witnesses: "The best acts of faith, of believing, come from children."

The poet also remarks with insight that he has placed this section on believing first, "because here the book is at its youngest, having only gotten started, so to speak."

The poem that is also the theme of the book was born out of an experience in rural New Hampshire. The poet's eyes saw at the end of a pleasant lane, between two fence posts, a green gate where there was no gate at all. "Here was the best gate of all—only an opening—a step through—a green square that fitted within the last posts."

Ralph Seager came to poetry as a medium during the difficult period of readjustment faced by so many men following war service in World War II. Robert P. Tristram Coffin encouraged him in his early efforts, sensing a genuine talent coupled with an unusual gift for communication. The two remained fast friends until Coffin's death.

Seager has appeared in lecture series at Keuka College. In collaboration with Dr. E. Merrill Root he has written twelve lecture lessons on poetry for the Christian Authors' Guild. He has served as a panelist on the Poetry Section of the New York State Religious Writers' Conference, sponsored by the School of Journalism of Syracuse University. His work has appeared in the leading periodicals of the country. Married, he is the father of three sons and makes his home in Pen Yan, New York.

This book is also fashioned as a thing of great beauty. It was designed by Hélène Geauque, and hand-bound in the foothills of the White Mountains by craftsmen working at Wake-Brook House. It is bound in "contemporary textiles printed in patterns derived from the traditional designs used in the Calicut prints, which gave their name to calico."

—Benson Y. Landis

National Convocation

On The Church in Town and Country

• Under the Auspices of the Department of Town and Country Church, Division of Home Missions, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., in cooperation with the Pennsylvania State and York Councils of Churches.

YORK, PENNSYLVANIA OCTOBER 21-23, 1958

General Information

Who May Attend? You! If you are interested in the Town and Country Church. Ministers, ministers' wives, lay people, administrators of the church, religious educators, editors, officers of farm and rural community organizations, employees of civic and government agencies—all are invited.

For hotel reservations, write directly to the hotels listed on this page.

Headquarters:

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

36 South Duke Street York, Pennsylvania

An attendant will be at the registration desk on Monday, October 20, from 4:00 to 8:00 P.M. Tuesday, the registration will begin at 8:00 A.M. and continue through the Convocation sessions.

To help carry the expense of the Convocation, a registration fee of $2.00 will be charged.

Outline of Program

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21

Registration—8:00 A.M.

9:00 A.M. Opening General Session, Dale W. Medearis, presiding
9:15 A.M. Worship Service, Edward K. Ziegler
9:45 A.M. *Looking Toward the Future:* Robert Handy, Union Theological Seminary
10:30 A.M. Group Sessions on the Topic of the Morning

LUNCH

2:00 P.M. General Session, Henry S. Randolph, presiding
2:15 P.M. Group Reports on the Morning Session
3:15 P.M. Summation by the Morning Speaker, with Comments from the Floor

DINNER

8:00 P.M. General Session, Wesley A. Hotchkiss, presiding
History of the Rural Church Movement: Dramatic presentation by the Evangelical and Reformed Theological Seminary

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22

8:45 A.M. General Session, Clifford L. Samuelson, presiding
9:00 A.M. Worship Service, Edward K. Ziegler
9:30 A.M. *The Rapidly Growing Fringe Areas:* Truman B. Douglass, Congregational-Christian Churches
10:30 A.M. Seminars Meet (see list)

LUNCH

2:00 P.M. General Session, Shirley E. Greene, presiding
2:15 P.M. Seminars Meet (see list)
4:00 P.M. Denominational Meetings and Dinners

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23

9:00 A.M. General Session, Glenn F. Sanford, presiding
9:30 A.M. *Current Theological Conversations*—Panel: Wesley A. Hotchkiss, Moderator; Truman B. Douglass; James E. Hankins; Benson Y. Landis; Robert V. Moss
11:00 A.M. Summation: Richard O. Comfort
11:30 A.M. Worship Service, Edward K. Ziegler
12:00 Noon Adjournment

Seminars and Workshops

1. *Comity and Cooperative Church Relations:* Henry Randolph; Clyde Rogers; Martin Tozer
2. *The Church and Agricultural Policy:* Shirley Greene; Joseph Grottenthaler
3. *Churching Coal Mining Industrial Areas:* Mark Rich; Ross Bailey; Emmitt Insko
4. *Declining Population and Resources:* William Davidson; Richard Smith
5. *The Church in the Rural Urban Fringe:* John Bench; Charles Golden
6. *Techniques of Evangelism:* John Abernethy; Leslie Ross
7. *Social Welfare Needs in the Community:* Cornelia Russell; Tollie Caution
8. *Christian Education:* James Carr; Catherine Ezell; E. J. Hogan
9. *Recruiting for Church Vocations:* E. W. Mueller; Rosemary Nixon
10. *Theology and Rural Life:* Wesley Hotchkiss; Benson Landis
11. *Church Cooperation:* George Kerr; Vinton Bradshaw
12. *Techniques of Making Church and Community Studies:* Margaret Tammen; Glen Trimble
13. *Lay Leadership:* Louis Meyer; John Lee; Thomas Wheat
14. *Worship Material:* Edward Ziegler; Duff Tucker
15. *Churching Rural-Urban and Non-Farm People:* Clayton Pepper; Beryl Maurer
16. *Town and Country Commission on the State Level:* Stanley Skinner; Donald Schlicher
17. *Radio and Television:* Charles Schmitz; John Groller
18. *Audio-Visual Aids:* Clifford Samuelson; Francis Allison; Glenn Sanford
19. *Church Publications:* James Hankins; M. M. Bakos; B. J. Patton
20. *Churching Migratory Laborers:* Monica Owen
21. *Rural Development and Small Industries:* Colvin Baird; A. E. Cox; John Howes

YORK HOTELS

Yorktowne Hotel	$6.00 per day and up
Colonial Hotel	$5.00 per day and up
Penn Hotel	$4.50 per day and up
Brooks Hotel	$3.50 per day and up